LISTING OF CLAIMS

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1. (Previously Presented) A hardware system for performing media access control functions between a host central processing unit and a network, the system comprising:

a buffer interface that sends frames to the host central processing unit and receives frames from the host central processing unit;

a frame transmitter that includes a transmit buffer that receives frames from the buffer interface and sends frames to the network;

a frame receiver that includes a receive buffer that receives frames from the network and sends frames to the buffer interface; and

an encryption/decryption block that sends and receives frames between the transmit buffer and the receive buffer.

2. (Previously Presented) A method for processing frames from a network to a host in a media access control layer, the method comprising:

receiving an incoming frame from the network; and

processing, using operations implemented by hardware in an integrated circuit, the incoming frame for time-critical functions, the time critical functions including:

sending an outgoing frame corresponding to the incoming frame to the host;

formulating time-critical responses;

accumulating statistics; and

updating a media access control state.

3. (Previously Presented) The hardware system according to claim 1 wherein the frame transmitter includes a transmit state machine, the frame receiver includes a receive state machine, and further including:

a cyclic redundancy code block that receives frames from the receive state machine and the transmit buffer and sends frames to the transmit state machine; and

a timer block that controls timing for frames that are respectively sent from and received by the system.